

THE GALLANT EDITH BRATT
Comments by Joe R Christopher

I have read through The Gallant Edith Bratt by Nancy Bunting and Seamus Hamill-Keays (Walking Tree, 2021), and found it informative. A few points of interest:

(1) Nancy Martsch, with a note in "Beyond Bree", is an expert on the blueness of Bratt's eyes. (I should cite the essay here with page number in the book, but I failed to mark it as I read, and it's a long book to find any references later. But I am not kidding; In the Bibliography at the end of the book, Martsch's "'Tolkien's Reading Day and 'Eyes Clear As Glass'." Beyond Bree. April, 2021. 9". is cited. And at the rate that Bunting and Hamill-Keays correct name Tolkien critics on their facts. this is high praise indeed.)

(2) Humphrey Carpenter is no longer a major biographer.

(3) Bunting and Hamill-Keays, on the other hand, are not easily readable enough to call this a *popular* biography. Besides, it is only a half of Bratt's life. I'd like to know, in the second part of her life, about her decision to stop going to confession in the Roman Catholic church. (I have a sneaking suspicion that Tolkien's dropping his close friendship with Lewis was because Bratt became an Anglican--Tolkien decided that he himself was being punished by God for his being friends with Anglicans by Edith going back to the Church of England. Luckily, I am not an expert and have no high repute to defend. Probably it will turn out that Edith left the RC at the point when Christopher got a divorce. But again, who knows--I once talked to Christopher's first wife at a convention which Christopher and his second wife also attended as part of a large family group.)

Anyway, a valuable book; more scholarly than popular.